



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY 05 2011

Scripture Story: Genesis 11:1-9.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 10.

knockin' on heaven's door



Photo by Jennifer and Company

flashlight

"There were some among them, however, who feared the Lord, but who had been deceived by the pretensions of the ungodly and drawn into their schemes. For the sake of these faithful ones the Lord delayed His judgments and gave the people time to reveal their true character" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 123).

keytext

"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'"

(Genesis 11:4, NIV)

what do you think?

Do you ever try to be God? Complete the following statement

with one or more statements from the list below: I play God when I . . .

- a. tell on a friend who does something wrong.
- b. skip personal worship time.
- c. make important decisions after talking with friends.
- d. ask God to guide my future.
- e. eat healthful foods.
- f. don't listen to my parents.
- g. do my homework.

did you know?

The people of Babel didn't just come up with the idea to build a tower on their own. No, they had an instigator. His name was Nimrod, ruler of the nation, and a man whom the Bible refers to as a "mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:8-10, NIV). The great historian Josephus wrote: "Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God."

INTO THE STORY

"Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

"They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'

"But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The Lord said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.'

"So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth,

and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

(Genesis 11:1-9, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Who are the main actors in this story?

What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (*Underline* them.)

What aspects of the story are new to you? (Place an *arrow* beside them.)

What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (Draw a *rectangle* around them.)

The builders of Babel had harnessed two of the greatest powers known to humans: effective communication and unity. Can you give any modern-day examples of groups that communicate effectively and are unified in doing something wrong?

To whom or what was the tower a monument? What types of monuments to themselves might people produce or create today?

How do we know the difference between using the gifts God gives us as monuments to ourselves or as monuments to God? (See 1 Cor. 13:1-7)

What are two main lessons that you got from reading this story?

punch lines

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain" (**Psalm 127:1, NIV**).

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him" (**Psalm 34:8, NIV**).

"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway" (**Proverbs 8:34, NIV**).

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (**Colossians 3:1, NIV**).

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (**2 Timothy 2:15, NIV**).

"Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like" (**James 1:23, 24, NIV**).

"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (**James 4:17, NIV**).

other eyes

"I gave in, and admitted that God was God."—C. S. Lewis, 20th-century English Christian writer and scholar.

"When a man takes one step toward God, God takes more steps toward that man than there are sands in the worlds of time"—The Work of the Chariot.

Sabbath

The *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson challenged you to identify times in your life when you may play God by the choices you make. In what way were the builders of the Tower of Babel playing God? Explain.

They were not the first beings to try to play God. Read Isaiah 14:12-15. Then identify three actions and behaviors exhibited by Satan in his effort to kill God and take His throne. (Hint: Notice the number of *I*'s in Satan's statements.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sunday

Read the *Into the Story* passage for this week. Toward the end of the passage God is seen taking a very central role in the project undertaken by the builders. What was it that caught God's attention? Was God worried that the Babel builders were going to succeed in their act of defiance? What specifically moved Him to confuse their ability to communicate?

Monday

Read the *Key Text* for this week's lesson again. Do you notice anything peculiar about how the people arrived at the idea to build a great city with a megatower? Whom did they confer with about their plans? Do you ever launch out to do something "great" and forget to ask for God's input?

The Bible says that they wanted to build a great city and erect a huge tower "so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4, NIV). Great plans made without God are great plans doomed to failure.

List two goals you hope to achieve in the future. Pause now and ask God to tell you if these are the right goals for you to pursue. Trust God

to answer your request. Watch for His responses each day. Through His Word, other Christians, and circumstances.

1. _____
2. _____

Tuesday

In the *Flashlight* section Ellen White is quoted from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* in which she states that there were faithful believers among the rebellious and disobedient people who were building the tower. Some who assembled to erect the tower were sincerely mistaken in what they were doing.

Read Matthew 27:11-23. Who was being swept away in a tide of wrongdoing? What does Jesus' mock trial tell you about the dangers of following the crowd?

If you could witness to a friend who is about to join a gang or follow the wrong crowd, what would you say to them?

Wednesday

Read the scriptures in the *Punch Lines* section. Psalm 34:8, NIV encourages us to "taste and see that the Lord is good." How can you "taste" God? Why does the psalmist David ask us to taste God first before seeing how good He is? Don't you like to see your food first before tasting it? If someone asks you to close your eyes before they feed you a piece of some food, they are asking you to trust them. To experience God we must trust Him and exercise faith in Him.

Several texts in the *Punch Lines* section deal with obedience to God's Word. Choose one of these scriptures that specifically captured your attention. Explain what this scripture means to you.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Thursday

After reading about the Tower of Babel, list two ways in which the same attitude is seen in society today. For instance, people who store up huge amounts of money for themselves while other people who are in need perish.

1. _____
2. _____

Now list two ways that you can care for those in need in your community, church, or school.

1. _____
2. _____

Do one act of caring for someone today. Say a prayer for that person.

Friday

By right, God could have destroyed the builders of Babel for disobeying His direct command to scatter throughout the earth and populate it. Instead, God simply confused their language and scattered them Himself, thereby allowing them another chance to obey Him.

When was the last time that God gave you a second chance? Was it a test for which you failed to study? Did you somehow escape punishment for something wrong you did or something right you failed to do? Why not thank God right now for His grace toward you?

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 10.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.